

Message Text

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51

ACTION NEA-16

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CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07

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DRC-01 /135 W

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R 301318Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3366

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 4320

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, IS

SUBJ: SEBASTIA AFTERMATH

1. SUMMARY. REACTIONS OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND SEBASTIA SETTLERS FOLLOWING JULY 29 EVICTION FIRMLY INDICATE THAT NO EARLY RESOLUTION OF PROBLEM OF JEWISH SETTLEMENT ON WEST BANK IS IN SIGHT, WITH LIKELIHOOD OF GROWING POLARIZATION ON THIS ISSUE. END SUMMARY.

2. SETTLERS EVICTED FROM SEBASTIA JULY 29 HAVE TAKEN UP TEMPORARY RESIDENCE IN RELIGIOUS SCHOOL IN JERUSALEM, WITH AVOWED AIM TO CONTINUE THEIR EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH SETTLEMENT IN SAMARIA. VARIOUS SPOKESMEN OF SETTLERS HAVE TOLD SETTLEMENT EFFORT AND WILL LAUNCH MASS MEETINGS TO MOBILIZE PUBLIC SENTIMENT IN THEIR FAVOR. SOME REPORTERS HAVE STRESSED VERY DEEP RELIGIOUS AND EMOTIONAL CONVICTIONS OF SETTLERS.

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3. LABOR PARTY, AT MEETING EVENING OF JULY 29 OF LEADERSHIP

BUREAU AND KNESSET FACTION, UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED RESOLUTION, WHICH, ACCORDING TO PRESS, CONDEMNED ILLEGAL SEBASTIA SETTLEMENT ATTEMPT AS "HARMFUL TO THE STATE" AND "TO INTERESTS OF SETTLEMENT" AND EMPHASIZED THAT GOVERNMENT APPROVAL REMAINS A CONDITION FOR ANY FUTURE SETTLEMENT.

4. AT ABOVE PARTY MEETING PM RABIN CHARGED THAT SETTLERS EXPLOITED DEEPLY ROOTED "NATIONAL IDENTIFICATION" WITH SAMARIA FOR POLITICAL ENDS. HE URGED NOT TO CONFUSE LEGITIMATE DEBATE ON SETTLEMENT WITH SPECIFIC POLITICAL BID AT SEBASTIA, AND SAID THAT COUNTRY MUST CHOOSE BETWEEN ANARCHY AND OBSERVANCE OF LAW. DEFMIN PERES REPORTEDLY DESCRIBED FAILURE TO GET SEBASTIA SETTLERS TO AGREE TO ALTERNATIVE SITE, AND SAID, "IT IS NOT TRUE THAT ANY PART OF THE COUNTRY IS TABOO." SOME LABOR PARTY MEMBERS CRITICIZED FAILURE OF GOVERNMENT TO USE MORE FIRM ACTION TO PREVENT SETTLEMENT EFFORT IN FIRST PLACE.

5. DEBATE BY LIKUD KNESSET FACTION JULY 29 ENDED IN RESOLUTION CALLING "FOR ACTION TO CONSOLIDATE A PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY FOR URBAN AND RURAL SETTLEMENT IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA." RIFTS IN LIKUD OVER INVOLVEMENT OF SOME LIKUD LEADERS IN UNAUTHORIZED SEBASTIA SETTLEMENT WERE PAPERED-OVER, WITH DOMINANT THEME OF DEBATE, ACCORDING TO PRESS, BEING MORE SETTLEMENT AS LONG AS IT IS LEGAL.

6. NRP KNESSET FACTION SOLIDLY BACKED SEBASTIA SETTLERS. IT CALLED ON GOVERNMENT TO LAUNCH LARGE-SCALE URBAN AND RURAL SETTLEMENT PROGRAM WITH A SETTLEMENT IN SAMARIA THE FIRST PRIORITY. IT CLAIMED THAT SEBASTIA SETTLERS REFLECTED DESIRE OF NATIONAL MASSES TO SETTLE IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA, AND CONDEMNED LEFTIST ELEMENTS FOR INCITING CAMPAIGN FANNING HATRED AND BITTERNESS. WHILE NRP IS UNITED ON SETTLEMENT POLICY, MORE MODERATE LEADERS HAVE EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER ILLEGAL ACTIONS SUPPORTED BY "YOUNG GUARD" EXTREMISTS, WHOM THEY FEAR MAY JEOPARDIZE FUTURE COALITION TALKS WITH LABOR PARTY.

7. NO DATE HAS YET BEEN SET FOR A FULL KNESSET DEBATE ON SETTLEMENT, ALTHOUGH REPORTEDLY SUBJECT IS ON THE AGENDA.
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8. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH GOVERNMENT FULLY COMMITTED TO PREVENT UNAUTHORIZED SETTLEMENTS, WE CANNOT DISCOUNT FURTHER EFFORTS OF SEBASTIA GROUP TO PERSIST IN ESTABLISHING UNAUTHORIZED SETTLEMENT IN SAMARIA FOR SAKE OF KEEPING ISSUE OF UNRESTRICTED SETTLEMENT IN FOREFRONT OF NATIONAL DEBATE, WITH LIKELIHOOD OF EXACERBATING ALREADY HIGHLY-CHARGED EMOTIONS AND PROVOKING GREATER POLARIZATION AMONG AND WITHIN POLITICAL

PARTIES. WHILE IT IS TOO EARLY TO ANTICIPATE OUTCOME
OF KNESSET DEBATE, POSITION OF DAYAN IS LIKELY TO BE
CRUCIAL IN MAINTAINING UNITED POSITION OF LABOR-MAPAN
ALIGNMENT. AT SAME TIME, IF LIKUD LEADERS BEGIN AND SHARON
CONTINUE TO IDENTIFY THEMSELVES WITH FURTHER ILLEGAL
EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH SETTLEMENT, LIKUD VOTE COULD SPLIT
OVER ISSUE OF SETTLEMENT POLICY.
KEATING

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